Chief's Update December 22, 2011



Dear Tempe Police Employees,

This final 2011 Chief's Update is dedicated in part to highlighting some of the challenges we have faced and accomplishments achieved this year as an organization. Mostly I want to say "thank you" for your dedication and great work throughout the entire year.

Highlights from 2011 include the following:

In January, our SWAT Team responded as part of a regional response to a hostage incident at Chandler Mall. After several hours the suspect was taken into custody without injury to community members, hostages or officers. That month we also welcomed Todd Long back to duty in the Traffic Bureau. As I wrote then, life can be precarious, as we experience all too often in our daily work. It's good to know that when times are difficult, we always have been and will be there for each other.

In March, we again achieved excellent ratings on the Annual Tempe Community Survey. The results of your efforts continue to be reflected back in the positive responses provided by our community, and their continued support, which we must work hard to maintain.

We celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week in April and received recognition from the Mayor and Council for the efforts of the Communications Division. We hosted a Use of Force Academy for members of the media, which was attended by the major television and newspaper affiliates in the Valley – so that the media and our community could get a hands on look at the challenges and responsibilities our officers face on a daily basis.

On June 6, we successfully transitioned from a beat to a zone model deployment and simultaneously implemented the new PIN/CAD/RMS system. We completed a department-wide Suicide Awareness and Prevention workshop, re-emphasizing our ongoing commitment to keeping employees healthy and safe.

In July, each and every employee was encouraged to participate in the annual planning efforts to update our Strategic Plan. Most recently, we have undergone a reorganization which has affected the entire department, with an emphasis on the Operations Division. And, demonstrating our commitment to Intelligence Led Policing and Regional Partnership, the Arizona Republic published "5 Chief's Commitment to Community" written by Mesa Chief Frank Milstead, Chandler Chief Kiyler, Gilbert Chief Tim Dorn, Scottsdale Chief Alan Rodbell and myself.

When we experienced the loss of Tim Barber in August and Scott Saffell in October, we received an immense outpouring of sympathy from our community and the media. This genuine, unsolicited support is a direct reflection of the respect, trust and positive connections that you as individuals and as police employees have created with the members of our community. If there is a redeeming message in the loss of friends and colleagues, it is the clear reminder not to lose focus on what is most important in life – our family, friends, safety and health.

Finally, the press conference we hosted this week informing the community about the 15 month drug trafficking investigation on which we partnered with the U.S. AZ Drug Enforcement Agency, State Attorney General, and Maricopa County Attorney was a great success. It is a credit to the supervisors and detectives that we have not experienced the loss of an officer while working this complicated, dynamic investigation. As was noted during the press conference, our work is not done. The resulting CNN story is provided below for your consideration.

None of these successes would have happened without you coming together as a team. All this progress has been achieved despite the cut in pay and no increase in cost of living compensation. There do appear signs that the worst of this economic depression is turning the corner; during 2012 I will continue to support and advocate for the needs of Tempe Police employees with the City Manager and City Council. What an honor it is to work with such dedicated, capable employees and to serve as your Chief.

The high-profile highlights I recapped above are built on the less visible but equally important accomplishments gained from your perseverance and dedication each and every day. I realize that the gains we make as an organization, as work groups, and as professionals come with a price – hard work, countless hours, and time away from family.

The fast-paced intensity of the work we do adds to the stress and burdens we experience on a daily basis. All too often, based on the confidential and burdensome nature of our responsibilities, we don't take the time to decompress and take care of ourselves. I want to encourage you to take time with family, friends and significant others, not only during the holiday season but throughout 2012.

We have all experienced losses of family, friends and colleagues this year. It was during these times that we pulled together as more than co-workers, but as friends, demonstrating the close bonds, compassion and resilience of the Tempe Police Family.

I look forward to another rewarding and safe year in 2012 and can't express enough how deeply I value and appreciate all the great work you do, individually and collectively.

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THANK YOU!	

Tom

Sincerely,



Ariz. police, DEA bust 'extensive' drug-trafficking ring

By the CNN Wire Staff Updated 9:57 PM EST, Tue December 20, 2011

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- >Authorities seize \$7.8 in cash and make more than 200 arrests
- >They also recover 650 pounds of marijuana and 435 pounds of methamphetamine
- >The 15-month investigation was dubbed "Operation Crank Call"

(CNN) -- Authorities in Arizona said Tuesday they seized 44 firearms, 650 pounds of marijuana, 435 pounds of methamphetamine and \$7.8 million in cash as part of a sting operation that successfully dismantled an "extensive" drug-trafficking ring.

The operation, dubbed "Operation Crank Call," also resulted in more than 200 arrests and the recovery of 123 pounds of cocaine and 4.5 pounds of heroin, Tempe, Arizona, police said in a statement. They worked with detectives from the Phoenix Drug Enforcement Administration during the 15-month investigation, at least a part of which was conducted undercover.

"The success of this operation is a direct result of Law Enforcement agencies working cooperatively toward a common goal. That goal is to rid our communities of organized crime," Tempe Chief of Police Tom Ryff said in the statement.

"These are sophisticated, criminal enterprises. As Chief of Police, I am committed to working in partnership with the community and other law enforcement agencies to curtail drug trafficking in the City of Tempe and throughout the valley," he added.

Police said the dismantled trafficking ring was linked to the much-feared Sinaloa cartel, which has been blamed for widespread acts of violence across the border in Mexico.

In October, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials said that at least 70 suspected drug smugglers with alleged ties to the Sinaloa cartel had been arrested.

More than 20 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies were involved in that 17-month investigation, dubbed "Operation Pipeline Express."

http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/20/justice/arizona-drug-bust/